

THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

NEW PROGRAM PLANNING



WELCOME

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VISITOR EXPERIENCE PANEL MEMBERS



AGENDA



National Panel on **VISITOR EXPERIENCE** Programming
October 10-11, 2002
National Park Foundation Headquarters, Washington, DC

OCTOBER 10, 9:00AM - 5:00PM

OPENING [9:00 - 10:00 AM]

- Breakfast
- Welcome and Thank you!
- Participants
- Announcements
- Purpose and Background
- Keys to Success

SESSION A - THE VALUE OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMING WITHIN NPS [10:00 - 11:15 AM]

- Point of Origin?
- Ranking Reasons
- Typical and Ideal Results
- Contribution to Mission
- Evidence
- Research Needs

BREAK [11:15 - 11:30 AM]

SESSION B - ESTABLISHING AND GROWING A VISITOR EXPERIENCE PROGRAM [11:30 AM - 12:30 PM]

- Resources
- Obstacles
- Innovative Approaches
- Priorities
- Research Needs

LUNCH [12:30 - 1:30 PM]

SESSION C - ROAD TRIP [1:30 - 4:30 PM WITH BREAK]

- Site Visit
- The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly
- Picture This
- Where's the...
- Audiences
- Professional Development
- Research Needs

OCTOBER 11, 8:00AM - 12:00PM



BREAKFAST [8:00 - 8:15 AM]

SESSION D - MAKING THE GOOD PROGRAM GREAT [8:15 - 9:30 AM]

- Moving from Good to Great
- Needs Assessment and Program Planning
- Evaluation
- Partnerships
- Marketing
- Sustainability - Three Little Pigs
- Research Needs

BREAK [9:30 - 9:45 AM]

SESSION E - VISION FOR VISITOR EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMING [9:45 - 11:15 AM]

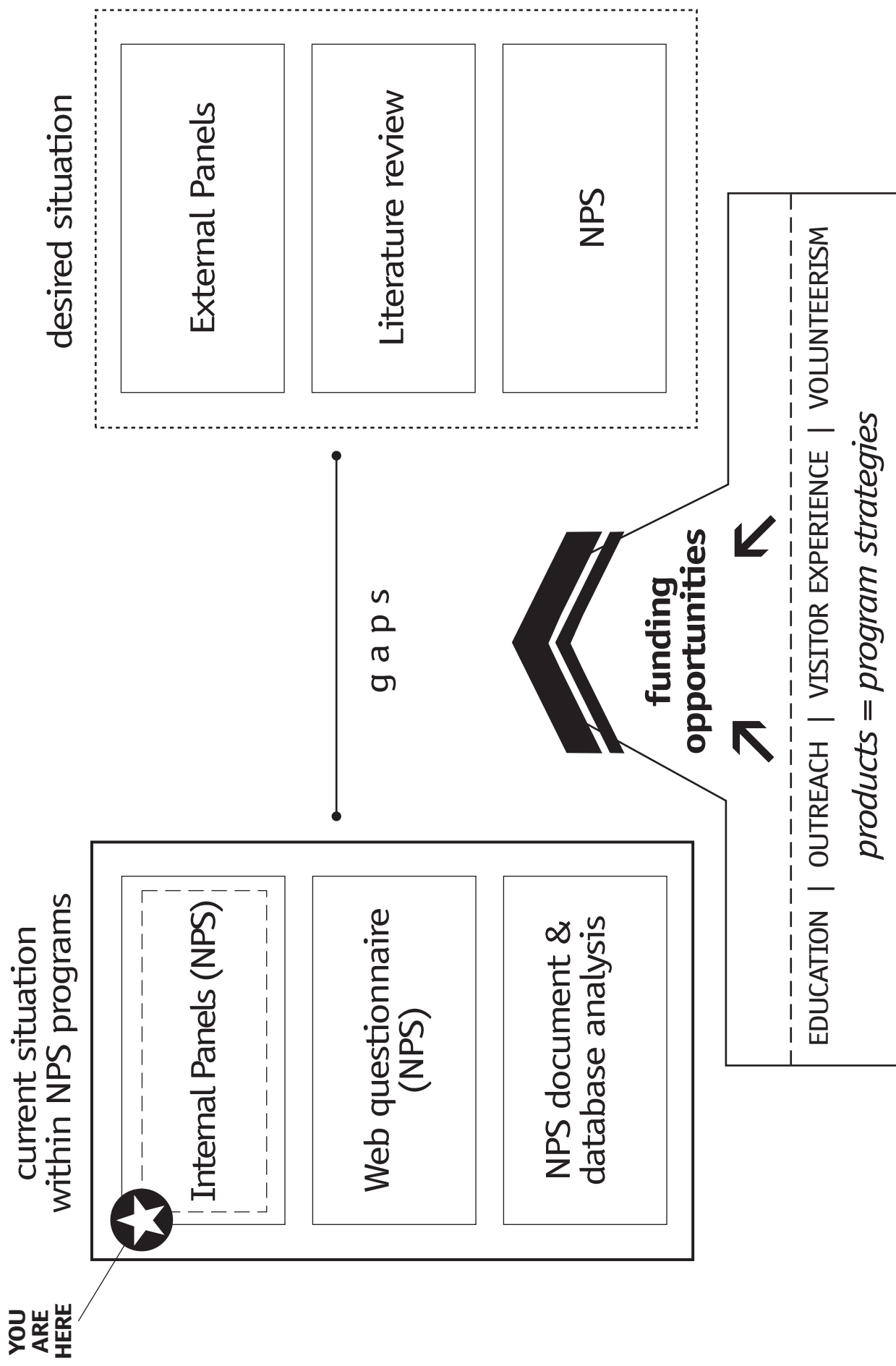
- Vision
- Dream
- Impact
- Research Needs

CLOSING [11:15 - 11:30 AM]

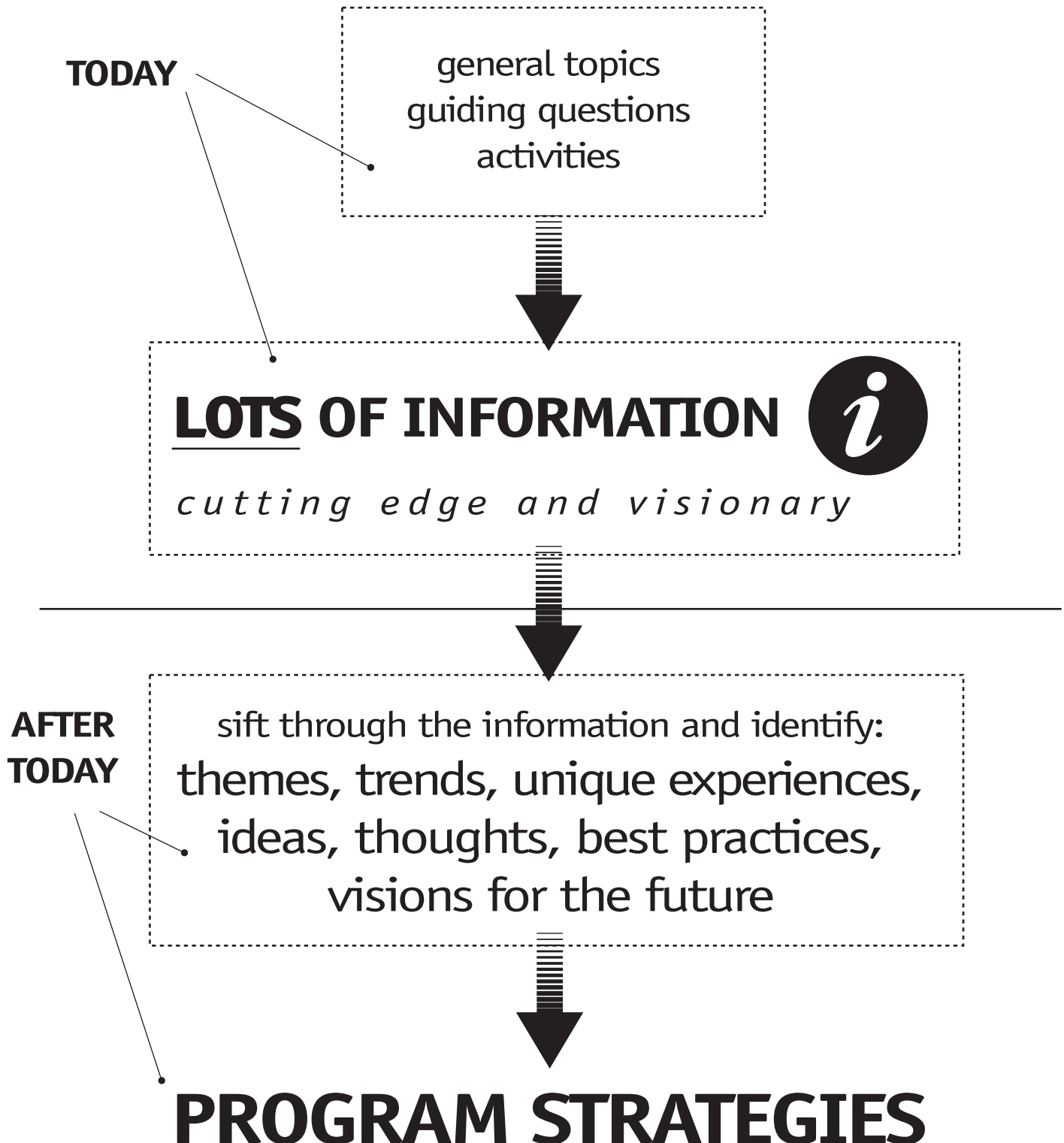
- Summary
- Appreciation

process overview

(needs assessment)



NPS internal panel data collection process





KEYS **2** SUCCESS

For me to feel that my participation today was worthwhile...

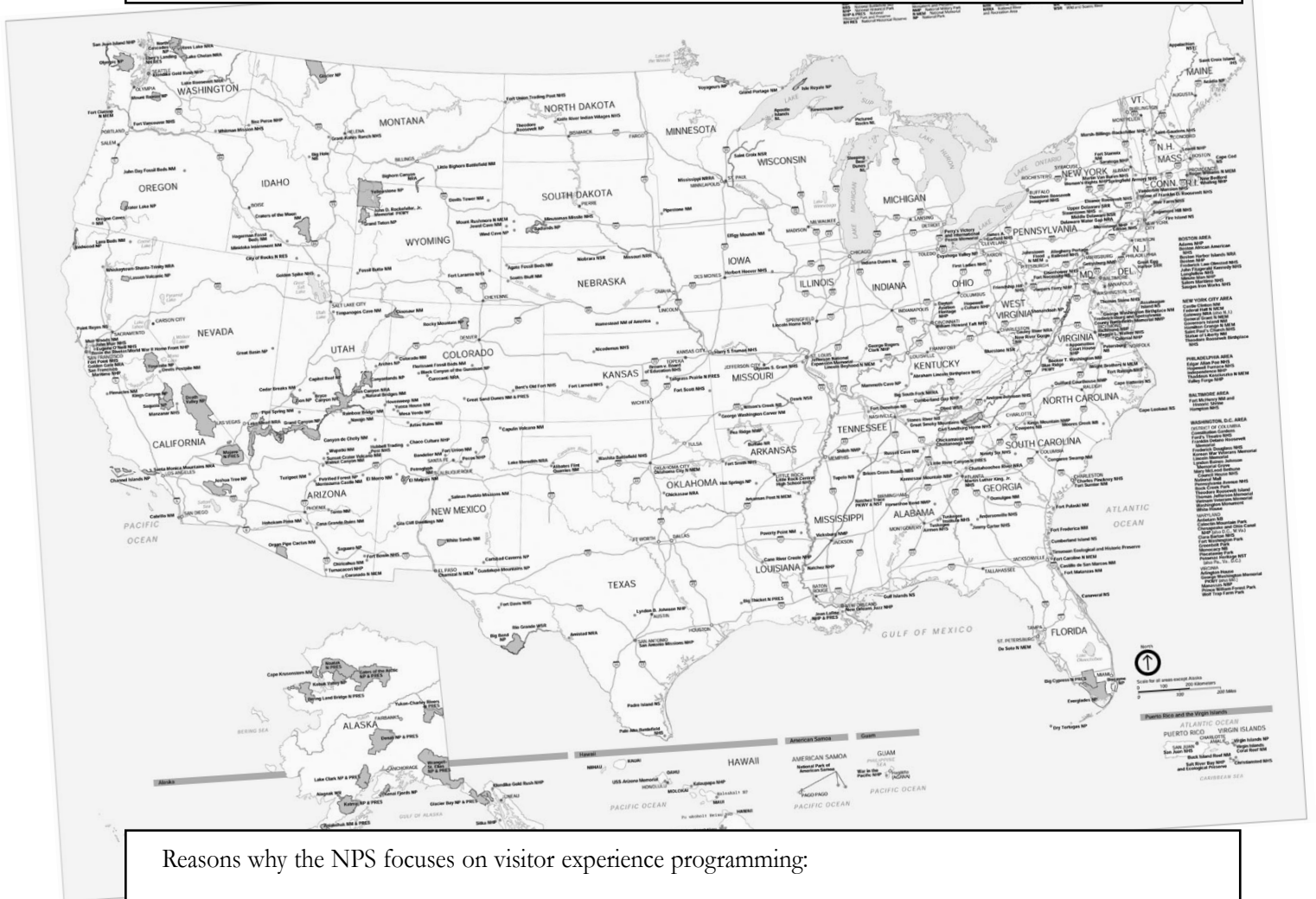
- I need to know the 'big picture' before I feel I can make a useful contribution.
Background reading and presentation; Breaks/lunch
- I want to participate in discussions that are balanced among all contributors.
Various group techniques; Personal restraint
- I want to add ideas that may not seem to 'fit' into any of the discussions.
Multiple sessions; Parking lot; Breaks/lunch
- I would like to know how my information contributed to the final products.
Receive information at end of project (March 2003)
- I would like an opportunity today and in the future to network with other participants. *Breaks/lunch*
- I...

POINT OF ORIGIN



your name

your park unit



Reasons why the NPS focuses on visitor experience programming:

PROGRAM TRAIL



Typically, what happens to a person as a result of participating in an NPS program?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing the typical results of participating in an NPS program.

Ideally, what should happen to a person as a result of participating in an NPS program?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing the ideal results of participating in an NPS program.

RESOURCE CHECK SHEET



What resources do NPS staff use to establish visitor experience programming? Do they vary across parks?



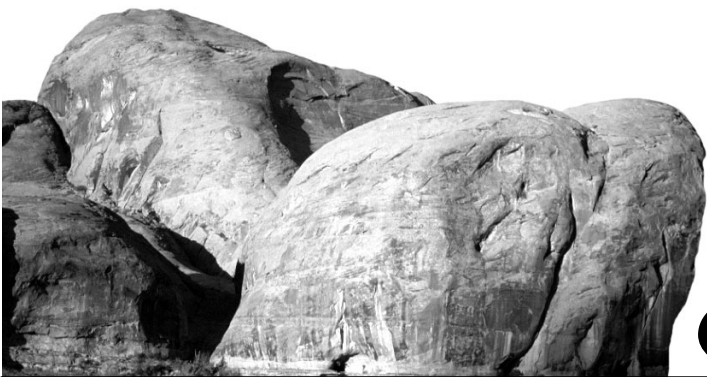
Where do these resources typically come from? Does that vary? How?



What resources do NPS staff use to grow an already established program?



What resources are most difficult to obtain?



OBSTACLES



What are the biggest obstacles NPS personnel face when trying to establish visitor experience programming?



What are the biggest obstacles NPS personnel face when trying to grow visitor experience programming?

Finally, place an asterisk (*) next to the obstacles that are directly related to the context of the NPS.





INNOVATIVE APPROACHES



What are some of the most innovative approaches you have seen to establish and grow visitor experience programs in the NPS?



PRIORITIES



ESTABLISHING

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

GROWING

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____



ROAD TRIP!

You have been asked to take a trip around the country to visit randomly selected National Park Units. The following pages provide you an opportunity to keep a “journal” of the notable things that you see. Before you leave, tell us a bit about yourself!

LOCAL PARK
PERSPECTIVE

NPS-WIDE
PERSPECTIVE

FAIRLY NEW TO NPS

“OLD-TIMER”

WORKED MOSTLY
IN SIMILAR
SETTINGS

WORKED IN VERY
DIVERSE
SETTINGS

EXPERTISE IS FAIRLY
FOCUSED

EXPERTISE IS MULTI-
DISCIPLINARY



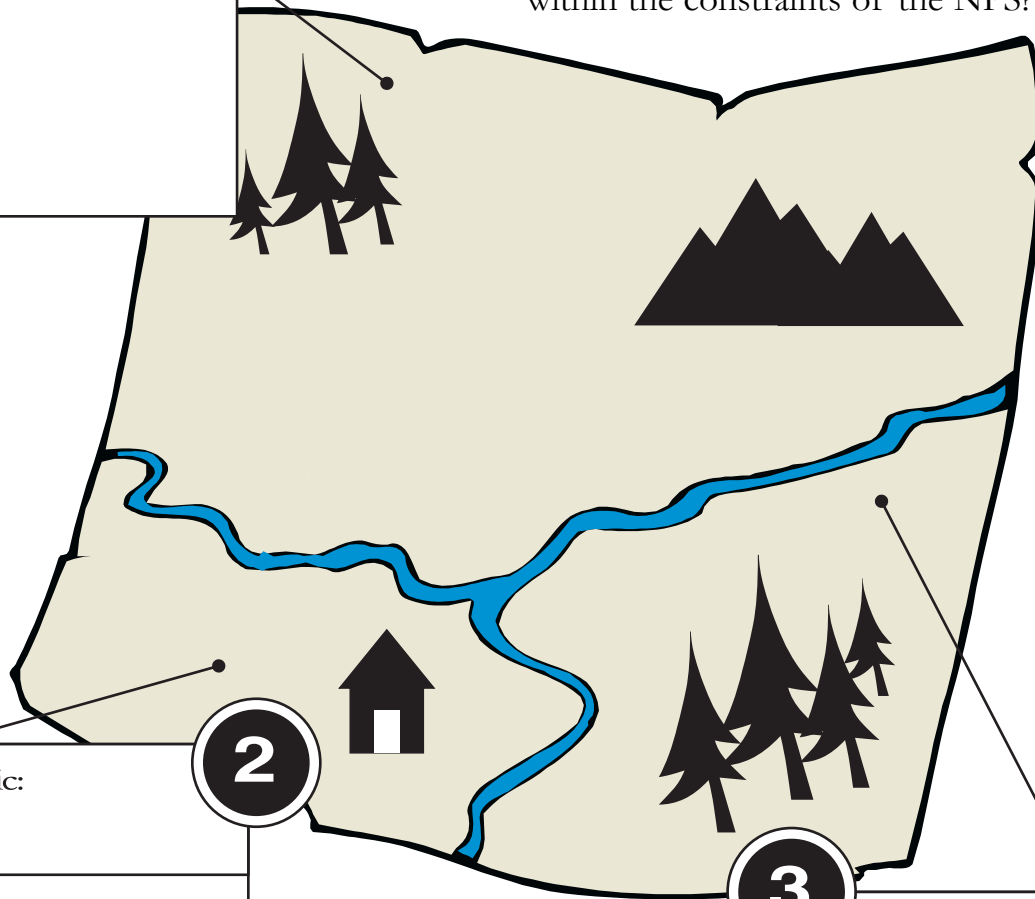
SITE VISIT



Begin your trip by visiting a number of NPS sites with which you are unfamiliar. Conduct an assessment of the visitor experience programs you see. What three characteristics would you use to determine each program's potential for success within the constraints of the NPS?

1

Characteristic:
Why?



2

Characteristic:
Why?

3

Characteristic:
Why?

THE GOOD, THE BAD... AND THE UGLY



In your travels, you will see a wide range of visitor experience practices. Based on your experiences, comment on the following:

the **GOOD**

In the National Park Service, we're really good at doing these three visitor experience-related things:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In the National Park Service, we could really use some guidance or assistance with these three visitor experience-related things:

the **BAD**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

the **UGLY**

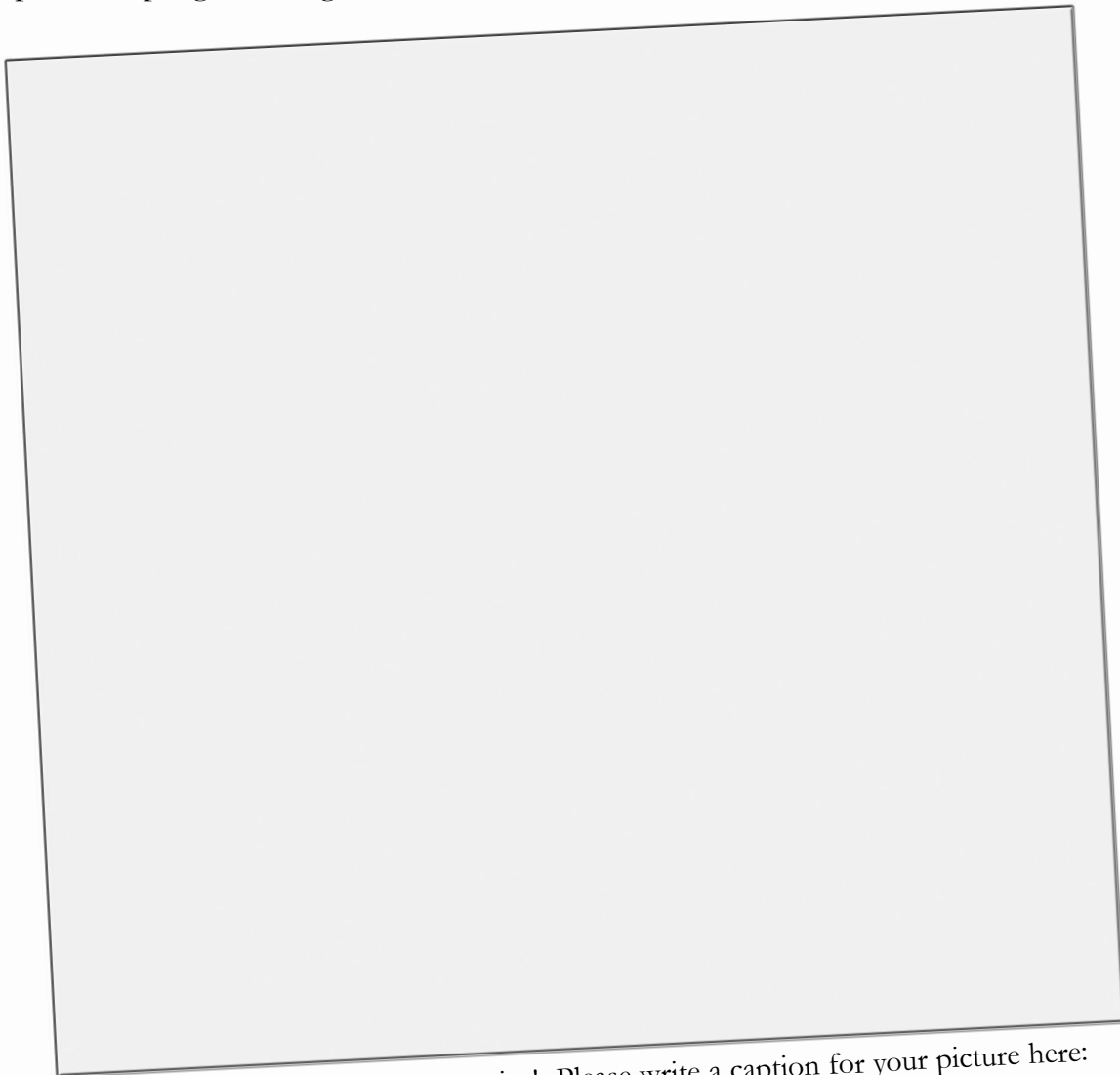


NPS Photo

PICTURE THIS!



Draw a “snapshot” of what the National Park Service does best related to visitor experience programming.



Check out this picture perfect practice! Please write a caption for your picture here:

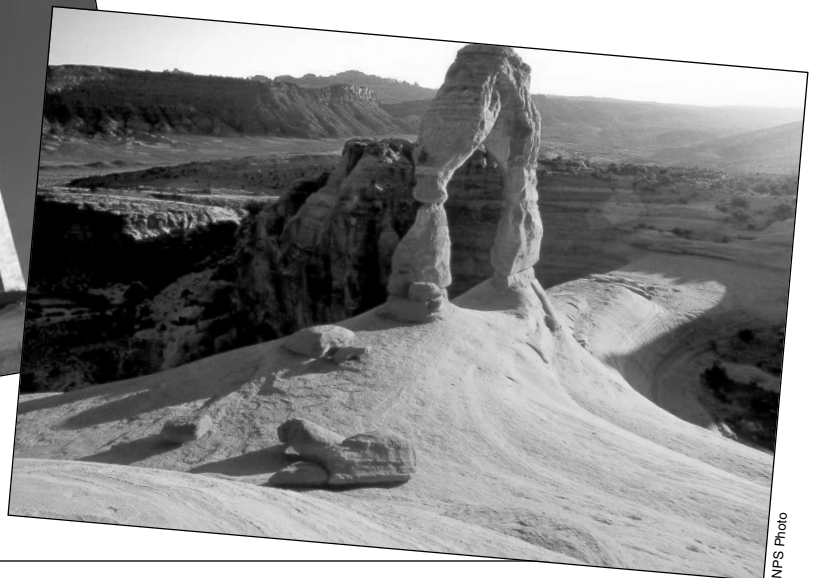
WHERE'S THE...



Thinking about what you've seen on your trip so far, are there things you didn't see often, or at all?



NPS Photo



NPS Photo

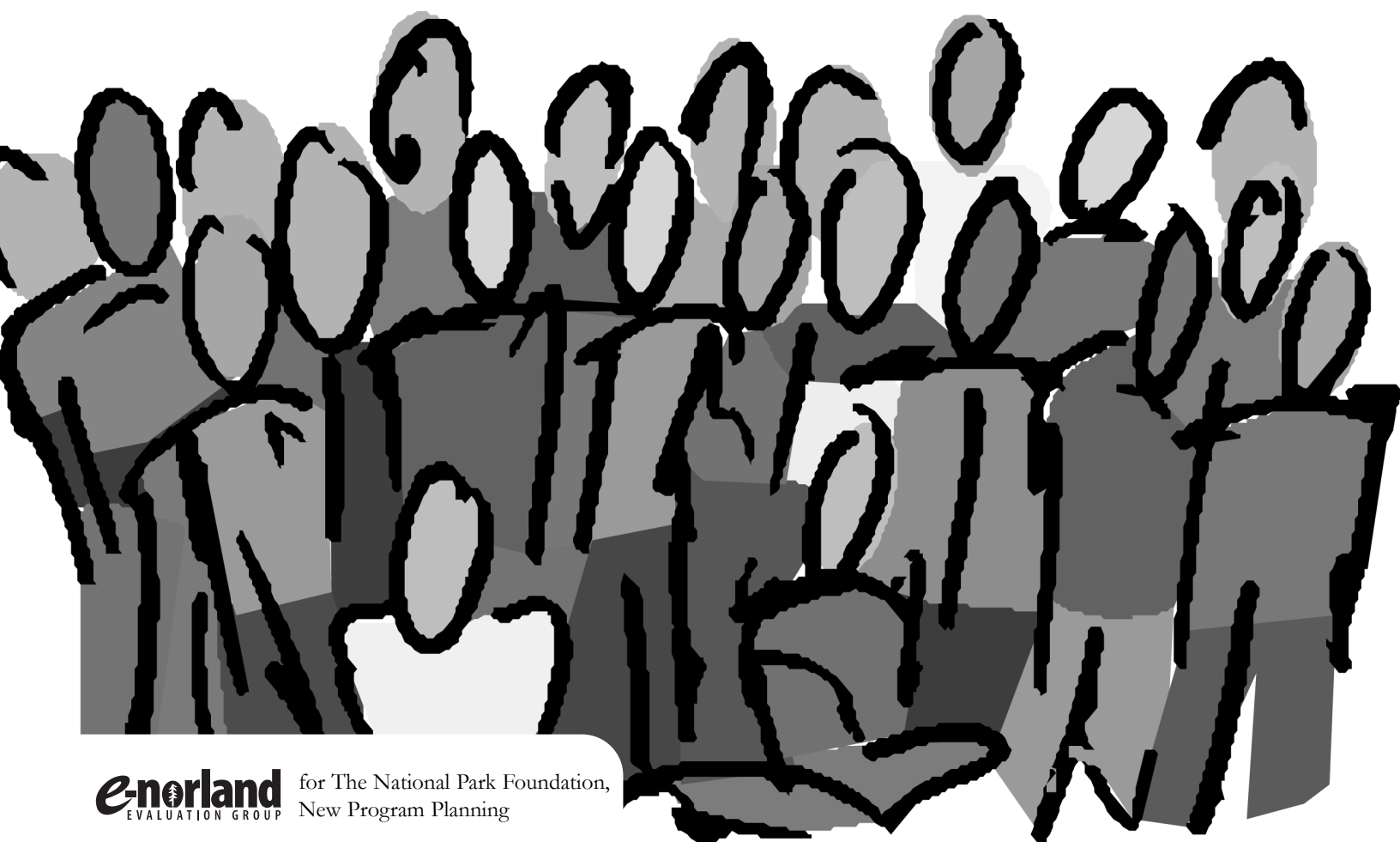
AUDIENCES



Along the way, who are the audiences you've seen participating most often?



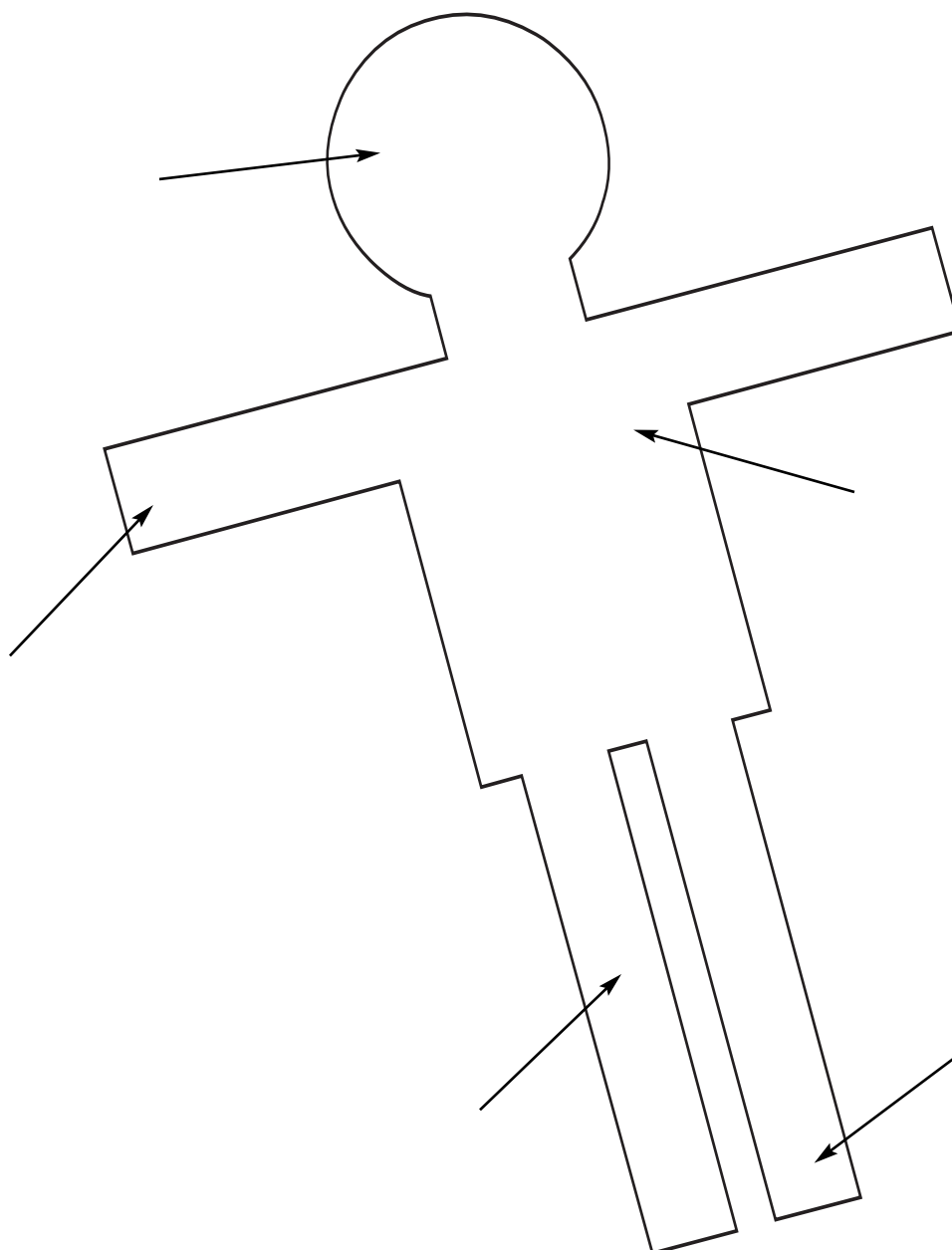
What audiences are noticeably absent?



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



What are the various types of NPS staff professional development (related to visitor experience programming) taking place throughout the agency?





MOVING FROM GOOD TO GREAT

Successful visitor experience programs appear to have several characteristics in common including:

NEEDS ASSESSMENT & PROGRAM PLANNING

ON-GOING EVALUATION

ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES

FOCUS ON PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY



NEEDS ASSESSMENT & PLANNING



What types of needs assessment processes are currently most often used?
Are there others?



What types of program planning processes are currently most often used?
Are there others?



Who's involved (individuals
and organizations)?

EVALUATION



What percent of programs you saw had evaluation...
...after their programs?

_____ %



...built into their programs?

_____ %



What methods were used?



NPS Photo

What evidence did you see of partnerships with other organizations?

What different types of partners were there?

Why were some partnerships working well?
Why were others not working so well?

MARKETING



How were the programs marketed?

3 LITTLE PIGS



THE THIRD LITTLE PIG BUILT HER HOUSE OUT OF BRICKS -
AND IT LASTED.....



What are the “key bricks” in NPS visitor experience programs that promote sustainability?



VISION



In five years, NPS visitor experience programming...

- ☐ CAN
- ☐ OUGHT TO
- ☐ MUST
- ☐ SHOULD
- ☐ WILL HAVE
- ☐ SHOULD NOT
- ☐ BETTER HAVE
- ☐ REALISTICALLY
- ☐ WILL LIKELY
- ☐ CANNOT
- ☐ CAN ENSURE

VISION



In five years, NPS visitor experience programming...

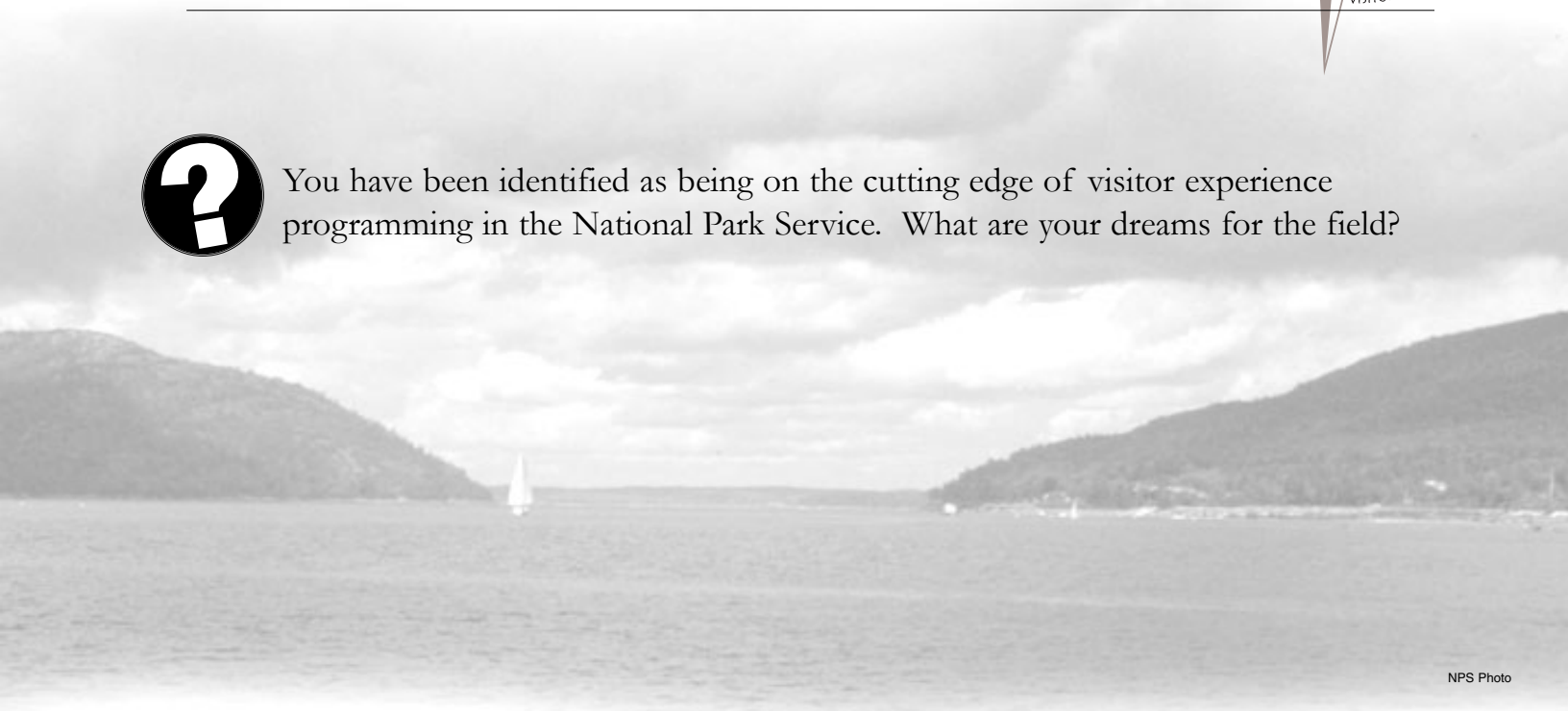
- ☐ CAN GUARANTEE
- ☐ CAN REPORT
- ☐ WILL DOCUMENT
- ☐ WILL STOP
- ☐ WILL AVOID
- ☐ WILL DISCONTINUE
- ☐ WILL REVAMP
- ☐ WILL REINVENT
- ☐ WILL ESTABLISH
- ☐ WILL PROVIDE TESTAMENT
- ☐ WILL ENCOURAGE
- ☐ WILL DEMONSTRATE

Please vote for your top three with an asterisk (*).

DREAMS



You have been identified as being on the cutting edge of visitor experience programming in the National Park Service. What are your dreams for the field?



NPS Photo

IMPACT



If you were retiring in one year, what would you work especially hard on (in the field of visitor experience programming) that you believe would hold the best potential for impact in the National Park Service?



SET-UP

LESSON PLAN

(10-15 persons in attendance, two group leaders)

All sessions will be held in the large room. In the room: three to four tables with chairs and standing flip charts for each table. (On each table: markers, name cards, pens, extra paper, masking tape, packets.) To the side: table with name tags and markers. Table in front for leaders. Paper on walls. Refreshments in hallway including water, ice, coffee, tea, soft drinks, juices.

In Packet (at each chair)

Agenda, copies of Power Point presentation, Keys 2 Success, Program Descriptions, Participant Lists, Feedback Sheets, disk, business cards.

OPENING [60 MINS]

- Breakfast [20 min]
- Welcome and Thank You from the National Park Foundation [10 min]
- Introduction of Participants and Organizations Represented [10 min]
 - Distribute "Point of Origin" handout. Have individuals complete it - will share in first session.
- Announcements [5 min]
 - Logistics, agenda and allocation of time for the day; questions.
- Purpose and Background [10 min]
 - Presentation on: the purpose, the process, the internal panels
- Keys to Success for Today [5 min]
 - Distribute "Keys 2 Success" handout; review with group and ask for additional 'keys'.



“The Value of Education Programming in the National Park Service”

- Each person introduces themselves with their "Point of Origin" handout and gives one reason why the NPS focuses on Educational Programs. [30 min]
 - *Individual report-out and recording of responses.*
- If you were to rank these various reasons, would your ranking be representative of the entire park service or does the importance of the reasons vary depending upon the park? Explain. [10 min]
 - *Large group discussion and recording responses.*
- Typically, what happens to a person as a result of participating in an NPS educational program? [5-7 min]
 - *Distribute "Program Trail". Individuals complete top half.*
- Ideally, what should happen to a person as a result of participating in an NPS educational program? [15 min]
 - *Individuals complete bottom half and discuss in flip chart groups. Large group report out of salient discussion points and recording of responses.*
- How does Educational Programming contribute to the mission of the NPS? How do you know? [10 min]
 - *Small groups draw on flip chart: circle in middle (representing NPS mission) and arrows pointing at it with ways this type of programming contributes to the NPS mission. Large group discussion.*
- What are the research needs, regarding Educational Programming, which arise from this discussion? [5 min]
 - *Individuals write their ideas on sticky notes and place in the "research needs" parking lot.*

[15 minute break]



“Establishing and Growing a Visitor Experience Program”

- What resources do NPS staff use to establish visitor experience programming? Do they vary across different parks? Where do these resources typically come from? Does that vary? In what way? What resources do NPS staff use to grown an already established program? [15 min]
 - *Distribute "Resource Checklist". In pairs, complete the questions. Share in small groups. Report out in large group.*
- What are the biggest obstacles parks face when trying to establish visitor experience programming? What are the biggest obstacles parks face when trying to grow visitor experience programming? Which of these are related to the NPS? [15 min]
 - *Distribute "Obstacles" handout. Complete in small groups. Debrief in large group.*
- What are some of the most innovative approaches you have seen used to establish and grow visitor experience programs within the NPS? [15 min]
 - *Distribute “innovative Approaches” handout. Complete individually. Share in large group.*
- Put the following in order of importance to establishing a visitor experience program within the NPS: the staff, the funding, the content focus, the physical environment, the leadership, the planning process, the evaluation design, the target audiences, the targeted outcomes, activities. Now put them in order of importance when growing an already established program. [20 min]
 - *In teams of 2-3, order the file cards for establishing a program. Write order on "Priorities" sheet. Now re-order them (if necessary) for growing a program and write order on "Priorities" sheet. Note the top 2-3 and the bottom 2-3 in each list and discuss in large groups.*
- What are the research needs, regarding visitor experience programming within the NPS, which arise from this discussion? [5 min]
 - *Have people write their ideas on sticky notes and place in the "research needs" Parking Lot.*

[Lunch 45 minutes]



SESSION C [180 MINS, WITH BREAK]

LESSON PLAN

“Road Trip”

You have been asked to take a trip around the country to visit randomly selected National Park Units. The following session is an opportunity to keep and share your journal of the notable things you see.

- Site Visit - Distribute "Site Visit" handout. In pairs, complete the handout by identifying three characteristics you would use to make a preliminary assessment of the program's potential for success. Share in large group. [20 min]
- The Good, the Bad and the Ugly - Distribute "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" handout. Individuals complete the sheet. Then, in small groups, compile three lists on flip charts to share with large group. [20 min]
- Picture This! - Distribute "Picture This" handout. As individuals, complete the sheet. Share in large group and hang on wall. [15 min]
- Where's the? - Distribute "Where's the..." handout. Complete individually. As a small group, make a list on the flip chart. Share in the large group. [15 min]
- Audiences - Distribute "Audiences" handout. Complete as individuals. Record on small group flip charts. Share as large group. [15 min]
- Professional Development - Distribute "Professional Development" handout. Complete as small groups. Share with large group. [20 min]
- What are the research needs that come to mind as you think about your trip around the country? [5 min]



SESSION D [75 MINS]

LESSON PLAN

“Making the Good Program Great”

This session provides an opportunity to discuss the things about visitor experience programming that can move the good program toward becoming a great program: needs assessment & planning, evaluation, partnerships, marketing, and sustainability.

- Needs Assessment and Planning - Distribute the handout. Have individuals complete it. Share with small groups - then share with large group. [10 min]
- Evaluation - Distribute the handout. Have individuals complete it. Share with small groups - then share with large group. [20 min]
- Partnerships [15 min]
- Marketing - Distribute the handout. Have individuals complete it. Share with large group. [10 min]
- Sustainability: The Three Little Pigs - Distribute the "The Three Little Pigs" handout (referring to sustainable programs.). Have individuals complete the handout, then share in small groups, and then report out in large group. [20 min]
- What research needs come to mind from these discussions? [5 min]

[15 minute break]

SESSION E [90 MINS]

“What Next?”

- Vision: Distribute “vision” handouts. Have individuals complete, then share in pairs. Write “common” categories onto stickies. Put stickies on large group flip chart - group by similarity. Then, discuss “what needs to change in order for each vision category to be realized?” [70 min]
- Distribute "Dreams" and "Impact" handouts. Give individuals time to complete both. Have them share in their small groups. Then ask for volunteers to share in the large group. [20 min]

CLOSING [15 MINS]





The mission of the National Park Foundation, chartered by Congress, is to strengthen the enduring connection between the American people and their National Parks.

National Park Foundation Strategic Plan 2001

DRAFT DESCRIPTIONS OF NPF PROGRAM AREAS

Volunteerism

The National Park Foundation seeks to promote deeply interactive, meaningful volunteer experiences that create and enhance personal, lasting connections between people and their National Parks. The Volunteerism program funds projects:

- Support innovative partnerships to facilitate volunteer experiences for new and underserved audiences.
- Create new ways for people to volunteer their time and talents for National Parks.
- Enhance the quality of the volunteer experience and improve the results of volunteer projects at National Parks.
- Support meaningful Service Learning opportunities for students at National Parks, connecting service with school curriculum objectives.
- Enhance the National Park Service's capacity to attract volunteers and manage sustainable volunteer programs by connecting with resources, expertise and innovation from the private and non-profit sectors, as well as other government agencies.

Education

Recognizing that National Parks are powerful learning environments that can provide students with in-depth, real-world learning experiences, the National Park Foundation seeks to promote collaboration with the formal education community, providing exceptional park-based learning and research opportunities for pre-kindergarten through post-doctoral students. The Education program supports projects that:

- Facilitate innovative collaborations between formal and non-formal educators at all levels to promote park-based learning.
- Create park-based learning opportunities for new or underserved audiences.
- Provide a sequence of learning opportunities for students, focusing on park resources and meeting national, state and/or local school curriculum objectives.
- Provide professional development opportunities and resources for educators to improve their skills and content knowledge related to National Park themes and resources.

- Use a broad range of innovative teaching approaches and techniques in park settings and/or using park-related content.
- Enhance the National Park Service's capacity to consistently facilitate excellent curriculum-based programming by connecting with resources, expertise and innovation from the private and non-profit sectors, as well as other government agencies.

Visitor Experience

The National Park Foundation seeks to provide opportunities for people to have personally meaningful, memorable experiences at National Parks. Recognizing that interpretive media and programs, as well as interactions with park staff or volunteers can serve as catalysts “for visitors to form their own intellectual and emotional connections with the meanings and significance of park resources,” (NPS Interpretive Development Program, 1996) the Visitor Experience program supports projects that:

- Provide meaningful park experiences for new or underserved audiences.
- Promote opportunities for life-long learning at National Parks.
- Provide universal access to interpretive media and programs for people at all life stages and abilities.
- Bring innovation to interpretive media and programs, helping people form *their own* connections to National Parks.
- Enhance the National Park Service's capacity to consistently facilitate excellent visitor experiences at National Parks by connecting with resources, expertise and innovation from the private and non-profit sectors, as well as other government agencies.

Outreach

Recognizing that all Americans should be able to benefit from National Park experiences even if they cannot or do not visit parks, and that audience outreach builds support for National Parks, the National Park Foundation works to create meaningful National Park experiences for people outside park boundaries, reaching people in their own communities. The outreach program seeks to support programs that:

- Use technology to create meaningful National Park experiences for people through websites, television, distance learning and other media.
- Create low-tech distance learning opportunities through traveling exhibits, educational kits and other outreach tools.
- Bring park rangers and/or volunteers into communities.
- Work with partners to bring new or underserved audiences to National Parks who would not otherwise have an opportunity to visit.
- Work with community groups and institutions, such as school systems and public libraries, to create meaningful park-related experiences for people in their own communities.
- Enhance the National Park Service's capacity to reach new and underserved audiences by connecting with resources, expertise and innovation from the private and non-profit sectors, as well as other government agencies.

SESSION FEEDBACK



Please provide us with any feedback regarding your participation in today's activities. Thank you!

PARTICIPANT LIST

National Panel on **VISITOR EXPERIENCE** Programming
October 10-11, 2002
National Park Foundation Headquarters, Washington, DC



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Chesley Moroz
Katherine Edelen

PARK UNIT

Alaska Regional Office
Canyon De Chelley NM
Intermountain Regional Office
Apostle Islands NS
Park Operations and Education
National Capital Regional Office
National Capital Parks Central
Rock Creek Park
George Washington Mem. Pkwy
Philadelphia Support Office
Shenendoah Valley
Philadelphia Support Office
Maggie Walker NHS
Harpers Ferry Center
Mount Rainier NP
Southeast Regional Office
Eastern National
Appalachian Trail Conference

REGION

Alaska
Intermountain
Intermountain
Midwest
WASO
National Capital
National Capital
National Capital
National Capital
Northeast
Northeast
Northeast
Northeast
WASO
Pacific West
Southeast
Other
Other